

memorandum

DATE: March 28, 1996

REPLY TO

ATTN OF: Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance: Nigam: 202-586-0750

SUBJECT: Approval of the Draft "Environmental Impact Statement for the Tank Waste Remediation System" (DOE/EIS-0189-D)

TO: Thomas P. Grumbly
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management

This is in response to your March 28, 1996, memorandum requesting approval of the subject Environmental Impact Statement. The Office of Environment, Safety and Health has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with our responsibilities under Department of Energy Order 451.1 regarding compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Based on my staff's review, analysis and recommendations, and after consultation with the Office of General Counsel; I have determined that the draft environmental impact statement is adequate for publication and distribution, subject to your acceptance and accommodation of comments we and the Office of General Counsel have provided to your staff through today. If you have questions about these comments, please direct them to Stan Lichtman of my staff at 202-586-4610.

We also suggest the following for your consideration: 1) the need for the communications plan to address sensitive issues, such as the potential for fatalities under the preferred alternative, and that the document analyzes alternatives (involving in-place disposal of high-level waste) that would not comply with applicable regulatory requirements and federal policies; 2) providing a longer public comment period than the planned 45 days; and 3) the advisability of establishing an Executive Committee to improve the efficiency of our communications and issues resolution in preparing the final environmental impact statement.

The Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance will continue to assist your office in filing the draft Environmental Impact Statement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other distribution matters.



Tara O'Toole, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health

cc: Martha Crosland, NEPA Compliance Officer, EM
Paul Dunigan, NEPA Compliance Officer, RL
William Dennison, GC-51

